The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and also other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1018. WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1930 FRANK MORRISON, Secretary VOL. 20, NO. 31.

The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall.—Bacon.

LOOKING BACKWARD: BOSTON, 1889

The fiftieth convention of the A. F. of L., at Boston, is held under social and economic conditions that differ from when the eighth convention was held in the same city in 1889.

The A. F. of L., in 1889, had a membership of 200,000. Its purpose was misunderstood and the workers' right to organize was hotly challenged in every quarter. "Unions interfere with the right of a man to run his own business," was the popular cry.

The unions were then discussing an eight-hour day. The 10 and 11-hour day was the rule and longer hours were not uncommon.

Company script and orders on company stores were used for wages in mining and other industries.

Safety and sanitation in industry were unknown. Workmen's compensation was a dream and employes accepted the common law—assumed risk, contributory negligence and the fellow servant theory. These defenses by the employer made it almost impossible to secure damages for injury or loss of life.

The various States were beginning to give favorable consideration to the system of secret balloting in popular elections. Adoption of the Australian ballot ended the herding of employes in long lines on election day that they could be more easily watched in casting ballots marked by the employer.

Free text books and compulsory education laws were unknown and trade unionists were urging the establishment of Federal and State labor departments to collect statistics and to further mediation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

Safety appliances were not discussed. There was no sentiment against convict labor and nation-wide wage reductions was the rule in business depressions, which were considered beyond man's control.

Economists insisted that wages were set by the law of supply and demand and that high wages increased production costs.

The unions were pleading for rigid exclusion of Chinese who were flooding the West Coast. Aliens were imported to break strikes. The state militia were used to intimidate strikers and armies of private detectives were assembled with the aid of public officials during large industrial disputes.

The unions were tolerated, but not accepted. They had no chain of benefits, no newspapers, no salaried officials, no homes for the aged. They met in dingy back rooms and they owned no office buildings.

Their theory of non-partisan political action amused a nation gripped by frenzied partisanship, that ignored the purpose of government and brazenly declared: "To the victors belong the spoils."

No "practical" man advocated municipal ownership. Public corporations, like railroads, considered they were under no obligations to the people.

It was an era of rampant individualism, with workers considered no part of the social organism. Employers were referred to as "good men because they give work to the poor."

Organized labor has led in the struggle to establish other social concepts.

Its success is shown by the difference between Boston in 1889 and Boston in 1930.

INJUNCTION EVIL MUST BE REMOVED

Boston, Oct. 11.—The injunction is classed as "a major obstacle" to the workers' progress by the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its annual report.

"We do not dispute the jurisdiction of equity against irreparable losses when there is no remedy at law," declared the council. "We object to abuse of procedure and misapplications of injunctions because of the courts' misunderstanding of the rights of wage earners and their exercise under present economic organization and environment."

The anti-injunction proposal pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and which is popularly known as the Norris bill, is favored by the council. Every candidate for Congress has been asked to specifically state his position on this bill. The query was submitted through State Federations of Labor. It is the first time in A. F. of L. history that such action was taken. When the council's report was written it was too early to determine the result.

"Candidates for Congress who decline to support the measure should be defeated," the council declares. "The issue is now before the wage earners."

STEEL MERGER SUIT TO SET PRECEDENT

Youngstown, Ohio, Oct. 11.—After one of the longest and bitterest corporation legal battles on record, testimony has closed in the attempt to enjoin the proposed billion dollar merger of Bethlehem and Youngstown steel corporations. The court's decision will affect future corporation practices.

The trial showed that President Grace of Bethlehem received $5,497,684 in salary and bonuses the last five years. Stockholders were ignorant of this salary, which was paid while dividends were passed.

ANTI-UNIONISTS MUST ACT

Minneapolis, Oct. 11.—The city council, approved a resolution calling on business men, organized labor and the anti-union Citizens' Alliance to get together on unemployment.

One alderman suggested that if employers who talk about relieving unemployment would reduce hours and maintain rates, their views will be considered. The council's action was long urged by organized labor.

AFL CONVENTION CONVENES; FORCED IDLENESS BIG ISSUE

Boston, Oct. 11.—Warm welcome by public officials and fraternal greetings by trade unionists, with a fitting reply by President Green, marked the opening of the fiftieth convention of the A. F. of L., Monday, October 6.

The A. F. of L. executive made an unqualified demand for the five-day week. This sentiment was affirmed by Governor Allen and Mayor Curley.

President Hoover addressed the delegates at the afternoon session of the first day. President Wilson addressed the 1917 convention at Buffalo, during the World War, but President Hoover is the first Chief Executive to address an A. F. of L. convention in peace times.

Mechanization of industry, the labor injunction and unemployment are the three major problems that are being considered by the convention.

Every delegate tells the same story of continuous labor displacement by the machine and enlargement of the unemployed army. The importance of this problem is illustrated by the Executive Council's annual report, which deals exhaustively with automatic machinery, the evils that follow enforced idleness and lack of consuming power.

The council insists that hours be reduced and the five-day week be established. Seasonal employment can be largely avoided by proper planning and wages should be placed on yearly basis, the report states. Government should maintain complete statistical services that would supplement similar activities of employers now employed, through their unions. Large-scale construction work in depression times is favored, as is a system of national labor exchanges.

The council recommends that it be authorized to continue its study of legislative and other plans to relieve unemployment and that the President of the United States be requested to arrange "for a special study of technological unemployment and related problems."

The need for high purchasing power is emphasized and the council repeatedly calls attention to the machine's ability to produce in excess of the people's buying power.

The labor injunction is classed as "a major obstacle" to the workers' progress. Greater activity in urging Congress to pass the Norris anti-injunction bill, now in the hands of the Senate Judiciary Committee, is recommended.

The workers' right to organize, the displacement of middle-aged workers, the Southern trade union campaign, labor's non-partisan political campaign and the wrongs of Porto Rico are also discussed. A resolution on the Lindbeck act, which will provide for 2.75 beer is favored. In again approving old age pensions, the council expresses the hope that agitation and discussion will make it possible to draft a satisfactory bill that will protect these citizens.

The convention will be in session two weeks.

IDLENESS MENACE IS NOT TEMPORARY

New York, Oct. 11.—"Unemployment is not a passing evil, but it is a danger to the present social organization," said Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University, in an address to students.

Dr. Butler declared that the desperation of millions of jobless in this country and abroad may lead them to "attempt something new" unless the present order is made "more just and attractive."

Dr. Butler referred to unemployment in other countries and said the vast dislocation of industry "is not an ordinary depression." He said that world leadership is faced by one of the most troubled and disturbed periods history has ever known.

WORLD WIDE IDLENESS DURING ENTIRE YEAR

Boston, Oct. 11.—The present depression is world wide, says the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its annual report. The unionists declare that the "closeness of interest between the nations of the world" was never more clearly demonstrated.

"We have suffered because of the depression abroad, and conditions in foreign countries have been intensified by the depression here.

"European countries were very seriously affected by the stock exchange crash last fall. They had large investments in this country and when the Wall Street crash was followed by similar disorders abroad. Business depression spread and very few countries were able to hold out against the general downward trend.

"With business depression has come world-wide unemployment. Suffering in the United States and Canada has been severe, but in foreign countries millions more have been out of work. Unemployment and business depression have cut down the purchase of parts this year to have been 23 per cent below last year."

HANDY MEN REPLACE SKILLED CRAFTSMEN

Washington, Oct. 11.—The skilled craftsman is being replaced by specialists and employers, especially in the building trades, do not want apprentices, said Ethelbert Stewart, Commissioner United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"In the building trades, at least," said Mr. Stewart, "there seems to be no shortage of material for training, and long waiting lists of applicants for apprenticeship are common. An experience some time ago of the commission on apprenticeship in one large city illustrates the point. In an effort to arouse interest among contractors and the public in the program and work of the commission, the secretary broadcast an address through a local radio station. The results, he said, were disheartening and disappointing. We were flooded with requests from boys and parents for more information and with applications for apprenticeships, but not one contractor came forward with a request either for details of the program or for an apprentice.'"

Vocational training in high school, said Mr. Stewart, "does not usually enable a boy to learn a trade thoroughly."

Its greatest value, he said, is to give a boy an idea of the trade for which he is best fitted. It also gives a knowledge that is helpful in every day life and enables him to cut down living expenses "by being able to perform minor adjustments on his automobile, how to do carpentry work on a small scale or how to do a bit of blacksmithing."

PORTO RICAN WORKERS FACE SERIOUS ISSUES

Boston, Oct. 11.—Porto Rican low wages and high living costs bring malnutrition and lowered vitality to the people of that island, said the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its annual report.

Wages for 60 per cent of rural and urban workers do not exceed 80 cents a day. Large corporations that are under absentee directors take profits out of the island.

"Polished rice is the chief food staple and is largely responsible for the inability of the population to withstand disease," the council states. "The fundamental difficulty is poverty. This seems to be due to insufficient native capital, lack of industries, absentee ownership, incompetent management in agriculture and industry and illiteracy.

"Porto Rico is under the United States flag and is responsibility to all agencies that can help in the solution of the island's problems."

The seriousness of these problems is shown by the number of unemployed, which total 170,421 out of 290,421 workers.

PEOPLE SHOULD AID LABOR'S LONG FIGHT

Boston, Oct. 11.—The American people should awaken to the work of organized labor and should wholehearted yaid that outstanding humanitarian movement, declared Mayor Curley in his welcome to the A. F. of L. convention.

The mayor said he recently called a meeting of the presidents of 25 universities in this State to discuss unemployment. Every invitation was accepted.

"I reminded these educators," said the city executive, "that organized labor was the one institution that stood for social advance and that in the present economic situation it is the only institution that has, as it always has, a constructive program. I said the trade union movement has secured social gains for all the people, despite opposition of powerful interests and even despite the opposition of workers themselves, and that it was time that organized labor was relieved of the burden of carrying on this struggle unaided, and that the things they urged benefitted the nation and should, therefore, be actively supported by every thoughtful citizen.

LAWS LIMITING OIL PRODUCTION UPHELD

Oklahoma City, Oct. 11.—Restriction of oil output, enforced by the State Corporation Commission, is upheld according to ruling by three federal district judges.

The complaining oil company asked for an injunction against the commission, but every claim was swept aside. Texas and other oil producing States are also limiting oil output.

HIGHER BUYING POWER

Washington, Oct. 11.—Higher purchasing power is the remedy for so-called overproduction, declared the Washington Post, in a leading editorial.

"The world," says the editor, "is not producing too much, but the economic adjustment is such that people are not able to pay for all that is being produced. What is needed is greater purchasing power."

TWO FIVE-HOUR SHIFTS WOULD TAKE UP SLACK

Boston, Oct. 11.—Two five-hour shifts—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—is unemployment and an employment solution by James O'Connell and John P. Frey, president and secretary-treasurer Metal Trades Department A. F. of L., in their annual report.

The two-shift system would reduce overhead. This plan is as certain as when the three eight-hour shifts displaced the two 12-hour shifts in continuous production, the unionists say.

"If our manufacturing establishments, with their present power and machinery, were to operate at full capacity four hours per day, it is estimated that production would be greater than at present. Industry is equipped, in fact it is over-equipped, to produce, but because of new inventions the machinery of today will be largely obsolete."

The report suggests that trade unionists keep in mind the difference between wages and hours. "There is an economic relationship between the two, but they are distinct problems. Wages determine the people's capacity to buy. Shorter hours might be accompanied by even greater unemployment than if wages were so out of proportion with the wealth created that the people could not consume."

INCOME TAX FAVORED BY WELL-KNOWN BANKER

Cleveland, Oct. 11.—A state income tax to meet the growing expenses of government was favored by Thornton City Sanders, of Dallas, at the American Bankers' Association convention.

He denied that such a tax will "frighten industry" from these States. "Four and one-half per cent is a typical State income tax," he said. "Several States have it. If labor and raw material conditions in a given State are favorable industry is not deterred from coming in by the fact that they can retain for themselves only 95½ per cent of their profits"?

STATE AIDS GROWERS IN FORMING "UNION"

Raleigh, N. C., Oct. 11.—Governor Gardner and other State officials, together with bankers, business men and tobacco growers' representatives, are aiding tobacco growers to form a "union." The object is higher prices and limitation of output.

Textile workers and other wage earners in this State, however, continue their struggle-handed battle to secure a living wage and reduce intolerable long hours. In Gastonia County, especially, wages are being driven lower and lower.

These workers use the same argument that the tobacco growers do.

LIVING CONDITIONS AS LONGEVITY FACTOR

Springfield, Ill., Oct. 11.—Living conditions are more important than heredity in determining the length of life of an individual, according to the State Department of Public Health.

The person with long-lived parents has a distinct advantage over the person of short-lived ancestry, if all other factors are equal. Living conditions, however, dominate, it was stated.

HOOVER FAVORS HIGH WAGES AND JOB SECURITY FOR LABOR

Boston, Oct. 11.—"Mass production must be accompanied by mass consumption through increased standards of living," said President Hoover in his address to the American Federation of Labor convention.

The President was given a warm welcome. Before he was introduced by President Green, the latter presented Mrs. Hoover to the convention.

President Hoover called attention to the new Amrican basis of wages that high purchasing power is our prosperity base.

"A conception of this sort does not at once find universal application," said the President. "We ough not forget that it is something new in the world's economic life. And there are, of course, those who do not yet believe. It is as far apart as the two poles from teachings of the economists of 100 years ago, who took it for granted that the well-being of the worker could be purchased only at the expense of the well-being of the employer group in the community, and further that wages could never rise above subsistence or the number of workers would so increase as to pull the weaker back into the cesspool of poverty.

"From the acceptance of this basis of industrial relations I believe America is making more progress toward security, better living, and more hours of leisure than those countries which are seeking to patch up the old system with doles of various kinds which limit the independence of men. Any comparison of the situation of our labor with the labor of those other countries, whether in times of high prosperity or today in times of temporary depression, should carry conviction that we are on the hight track."

President Hoover said it is estimated that 2,000,000 workers have been displaced from older industry by labor-saving devices. He expressed the belief that "some way, some how, most of these were established in new industry and new services." He said there is no reason to doubt that new discoveries and inventions will further increase living standards and continue to absorb displaced men.

"But most of these problems are problems of stability. With the job secure other questions can be solved with much more assurance. You as workers know best of all the security a man gains from security in his job. It is the insurance of his manliness, it upholds the personal valuation of himself and of his family. To establish a system that assures this security is the supreme challenge to our responsibility as representatives of millions of our fellow-workers and fellow-citizens."

UNION MEMBERSHIP GAINS DURING 1930

Boston, Oct. 11.—A. F. of L. membership gained since the last convention, despite the industrial depression.

"The average paid-up and reported membership for the year ending August 31, 1930, is 2,961,096, an increase of 27,551 members over the membership reported upon last year," said Secretary Frank Morrison, in his annual report.

"National and international organizations are required to pay only upon the per capita tax upon their full paid-up membership, and, therefore, the membership reported does not include all the members involved in strikes or lockouts, or those who were unemployed during the fiscal year for whom the tax was not received," said Mr. Morrison.

"A survey of the membership of the national and international organizations and the unions directly affiliated with the A. F. of L. indicates that because of strikes and unemployment there were at least 500,000 members for whom per capita tax was not paid to the A. F. of L. Adding this number to the 2,961,096 paid-up membership will give a grand total of 3,461,096 members."

Secretary Morrison states that 61 charters were issued by the A. F. of L. during the fiscal year ending August 31, 1930. The charters were divided as follows: Central labor unions, 11; local trade unions, 42; federal trade unions, 8.

PART TIME WORK IN PLANTS CAN BE PUT ON YEAR BASIS

Boston, Oct. 11.—Employment can be put on a regular basis and seasonal unemployment would, to a large extent end, says the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its report to the annual convention.

"Nearly all industries find their operations seasonal to some extent," it is stated. "But much seasonal employment is preventable. It is common knowledge that many plants have found it not only possible but advantageous to regularize their production schedules so that uniform operation is maintained throughout the year and their work forces are given continuous employment.

"In automobiles, the industry needed 475,000 workers for six months of the year—these men and women had to depend on the automobile industry for their living. How can these workers maintain their standard of living while their incomes are cut off!

"In clothing factories 155,000 are employed for six months, 4,000 of them are unemployed for five months —nearly all the other half year, and 11,000 are laid off for three months. In cotton textiles 431,000 are employed for six months and 13,000 are laid off for four months and 21,000 for two months. Here are 182,000 workers, in these three industries alone who lost from two to five months last year. This immense loss of income means a very serious lowering of income standards."

The Executive Council favors a yearly wage basis instead of a weekly base that will assure a steady income and encourage employers to stabilize operations.

"Some plants," the council states, lay off workers for two or three weeks in the dull season and call it a "vacation." A lay-off without pay is not a vacation, declare the unionists.

CHARITY IS HARMFUL, TO LABOR IS NORMAL

Boston, Oct. 11.—More than $24,000,000 was expended in charity relief in 79 cities during the first six months of the present year, according to the Russell Sage Foundation of New York City. Unemployment was the cause of a very large portion of this relief. More than 160,000 families, on an average, applied for help each month. Even in the most prosperous three months of 1929 charity organizations expended more than $1,000,000 a month.

"These figures, impressive as they are, can not show the full extent of the human and economic waste resulting from unemployment," says the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its annual report.

"To give a man charity when he wants work is to teach him dependence and rob him of the satisfaction of earning his living by constructive activity. It is equally unsound, economically, to give men relief while they are idle, instead of letting them create wealth by their labor. Unemployment is an indictment of our economic control.

"No employer would depend on charity to keep his machinery in repair or carry his overhead in dull seasons. And yet thousands actually depend on charity to carry their work force when they are not needed for production."

STRIKE EVICTIONS BEGIN

Danville, Va., Oct. 11.—Officials of the Dan River and Riverside Cotton Mills have begun evicting union textile strikers from company owned houses.

WAGE EARNERS' MORAL FIBRE SHATTERED BY UNEMPLOYMENT

A. F. of L. Executive Council's 1930 Report to Boston Convention

The social degeneration resulting from unemployment can hardly be estimated. First there is a physical deterioration, undernourishment not only for the wage earner, but for his wife and children, often resulting from privation, anxiety for the future which is a constant strain on the nerves. For growing children, undernourishment and privation, at the period when they need to develop strength for the future, may mean permanent weakness.

The moral and spiritual deterioration resulting from undernourishment, anxiety and discouragement is more serious. When a worker has given his best to his work and is laid off without consideration, when he has made every effort to save against the future, only to see his savings wiped away again and again by unemployment, when his attempts to rise to a better standard of living are repeatedly annihilated by loss of work, is it any wonder that he loses hope?

The injustice of it alone disheartens him. Can he be blamed if he develops an irresponsible attitude, lives up to the limit of his income while it lasts and appeals to charity when he is laid off?

The increasing insecurity of employment is having its unmistakable effect on the morale of wage earners. It is undoubtedly an important cause of the increase in wage earner bankruptcy, of irresponsibility and appeals to charity in cities where unemployment is particularly unstable. The habit of dependence develops from just such circumstances.

3,700,000 Idle Factory Workers; Farms and Offices Not Included

Boston, Oct. 11.—"We estimate that unemployment averaged 3,700,000 wage earners during the first six months of 1930, not including farm laborers and office workers," says the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its report to the annual convention.

"In both the United States and Canada unemployment this year has been very much above last year. For the first five months the averages show that 55 per cent more were out of work in the United States and 83 per cent more in Canada. Unemployment of union members averaged 21 per cent in the United States for the first seven months of 1930 and 10.5 per cent in Canada for the first five months of 1930.

"When unemployment reaches such a high figure it means that men and women are often out of work for several months before they can find employment. In normal times, a recent study shows that over half of those laid off were out of work for three months or more before they could find new employment. With conditions as they were this winter, it has not been unusual for men to be out of work for five or six months. No wonder savings have been exhausted and hundreds of thousands have been forced to apply for charity. Many who have been able all their lives to support their families and to tide over other periods of unemployment were forced to charity this winter."

Machine Displacement Will Continue; Labor Is Entering New Industrial Era

Boston, Oct. 11.—A startling picture of unemployment and its effect upon labor of the machine is drawn by the A. F. of L. Executive Council in its report to the annual convention.

Amazing developments in mechanization, it is stated, has already created an unemployed problem which threatens millions of workers, but "it seems likely that we may look forward to even greater mechanical developments than we have seen in the past and even larger numbers of workers affected."

The council agrees that increased production has created new work opportunities, but these jobs have been largely taken away by newer machines and newer technical changes.

"Industries on which 40 per cent of our wage earners depend for their living actually employed 900,000 fewer wage earners in 1929 than in 1919, although the business handled was far greater.

"In manufacturing, our factories produced 43 per cent more with 546,000 fewer wage earners; on railroads, 7 per cent more business was handled with 253,000 fewer employes; in coal mines production per worker increased 23 per cent and 100,000 fewer miners were employed."

The report states that the effect of these changes is far more serious than the figures at first indicate.

"In the ten years from 1919 to 1929 population increased 11 per cent and seven million more persons are looking for work as wage earners and salaried workers.

"One would expect these newcomers to look for work in factories, mines, railroads, and other public service trades, stores, banks, commercial houses, insurance and other lines. Instead, the factories and mines and railroads can be had only by displacing some one already employed.

"For these three industries are not only not creating new work opportunities, but they have added 900,000 to the army of job seekers by cutting their forces. Thus 7,900,000 men and women must look for work in service industries, banks and other lines outside manufacturing, coal mining and railroads. It is no wonder that these industries can not furnish enough employment."

The council rejects the theory that sufficient work can be found in service industries, such as hotels, gasoline stations and selling insurance.

Five-Day Week with Full Pay Demanded by Metal Trades

Boston, Oct. 11.—A demand for the five-day week without wage reductions featured the annual convention of the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L.

The convention approved recommendations on this subject by President O'Connell and Secretary-treasurer Frey. The latter declared there is no data by which it could be ascertained how many hours of work per week were necessary to supply the world's needs, but American authorities, he said, seemed agreed that five hours a day in this country is sufficient.

"If new processes continue to develop," said Mr. Frey, "the future might see labor demanding a shorter day than five hours."

President Wilson pointed out that a ten-hour day divided into two shifts would not aid the unemployment situation, as industry today, with its eight to nine and one-half hour basis, has resulted in overproduction.

The convention declared that lack of purchasing power is the main economic cause of the present depression, "regardless of fine spun theories of economists."

Dissatisfaction was expressed with the labor policy of Secretary of the Navy Adams in the nation's navy yards.

President O'Connell, Secretary Frey and all vice presidents were reelected.

MUSICIANS WIN

Peoria, Ill., Oct. 11.—Organized musicians defeated "canned" music and renewed their agreement with theater managers.